United Nations A/59/450

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 October 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda items 12, 22, 36, 37, 38, 43, 45, 48, 83, 84, 85, 87, 93, 103, 107 and 108

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Assistance in mine action

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion

Macroeconomic policy questions

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development

Sustainable development

Globalization and interdependence

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Elimination of racism and racial discrimination

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

04-56762 (E) 031104

Letter dated 15 October 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted on the occasion of the twenty-eighth meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 30 September 2004.

On behalf of the Group of 77, I would highly appreciate it if you could arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as an official document of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 12, 22, 36, 37, 38, 43, 45, 48, 83, 84, 85, 87, 93, 103, 107 and 108.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77

Annex to the letter dated 15 October 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ministerial Declaration

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China convened on the occasion of the Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 30 September 2004, reaffirmed the Ministerial Declaration on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Group of 77 at São Paulo, Brazil, on 11-12 June 2004, reviewed the developments in the international economic situation and the activities undertaken in the context of the development agenda of the United Nations, and adopted the following Declaration:

1. We welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004 on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, which decided to convene in New York in 2005, a High-level plenary meeting to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in the fulfillment of all the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals and the global partnership required for their achievement. We emphasize that the Event should focus on development and that the preparatory process for the 2005 event should be inclusive, open-ended and transparent and the outcome of the event to be a composite document, intergovernmentally negotiated through such a process.

Globalization

2. Globalization presents opportunities, challenges and risks for developing countries. We note with deep concern that the processes of globalization and liberalization have produced uneven benefits among and within countries, and that the world economy has been characterized by slow and lopsided growth and instability. The income gap between developed and developing countries has widened, and poverty has increased in many developing countries. We therefore believe that there is a need for a global strategy to prioritize the development dimension into global processes in order for developing countries to benefit from the opportunities offered by globalization. An enabling external economic environment for development requires greater coherence between the international trading, monetary and financial systems.

3. We emphasize the need for the international trading system to allow for legitimate policy space necessary for developing countries to pursue a pro-active, strategic mix of trade and development policies suited to their initial conditions, dynamic comparative advantage and changing needs and circumstances. It is particularly important to take into account the need for an appropriate balance between national policy space and international disciplines and commitments in the area of finance, development and trade when deciding collectively on future disciplines and commitments and on the implementation and interpretation of existing ones.

4. We call upon developed countries to conduct their macroeconomic and trade policies in a way that enhances the opportunities of developing countries to reduce the existing income gap and to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other development goals. Effective macroeconomic policy coordination among the major industrial countries and mechanisms that contribute to greater stability of exchange rates among the major currencies and financial flows to developing countries would be helpful in this regard.

5. We welcome the report of the World Commission on Social Dimension of Globalization and urge the General Assembly and other organs and bodies of the UN sytem to give full consideration to the proposals and recommendations contained therein with a view to contributing to make globalization inclusive and equitable for all world's people.

International trade

6. We reaffirm the objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration of upholding and safeguarding of an open, universal, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system in promoting development and poverty eradication. In this regard, we stress, inter alia:

- The importance of increased and effective market access and entry conditions in developed countries for agriculture, manufactures and services exports of developing countries, as a pre-requisite for assuring development gains from the international trading system and negotiations.

- Special and differential treatment should form an integral part of all aspects of negotiations. All existing provisions under the WTO Agreements on special and differential treatment should be expeditiously reviewed with a view to strengthening them and making them more precise, effective and operational. Likewise all outstanding implementation-related issues and concerns raised by developing countries should also be addressed as a priority with commercially meaningful outcomes.

7. We note with satisfaction that WTO Members agreed at the General Council on 1 August 2004 to a framework for further negotiations under the Doha Work Programme. The successful final outcome of the Doha Work Programme would depend on the manner in which negotiations take into account the interest and concerns of developing countries and in a process that is transparent and inclusive.

8. We welcome the outcome of the UNCTAD XI Ministerial Meeting held in São Paulo, Brazil, from 13 to 18 June 2004 which, inter alia, draws specific attention to the shrinking policy space available to developing countries to pursue development objectives and elaborates policy responses required to ensure that globalization is responsive to and serves the development needs of the developing countries, reaffirms the role of UNCTAD as the focal point in the UN system for trade and development-related issues and calls for strengthening of the UNCTAD mandate to enable it to provide policy analysis and serve as a forum for consensus-building in other areas, including the area of corporate responsibility and new and dynamic sectors such as ICT and creative industries. We emphasize the importance of the agreements reached at UNCTAD XI to provide a positive impetus to the ongoing WTO negotiations in pursuance of the Doha Work Programme.

9. We note with great concern that a large number of developing countries, particularly LDCs and commodity-dependent countries, continue to remain marginalized in international trade and the trading system and are still vulnerable to external shocks. The commodity sector continues to be the mainstay of the economy of many developing countries in terms of the generation of income, savings and foreign exchange, as well as employment and livelihood, particularly for the poor and women. Special attention thus needs to be paid to the sector both by developing countries and by the international community, including through the provision of development assistance, the reform of the multilateral trading system, securing competitive conditions in commodity markets, and addressing price instability and declining terms of trade through both governmental action and market based instruments. We stress in particular the need for enhanced, equitable and predictable market access for commodities of key importance to developing countries, addressing the problems of oversupply, setting up operational compensatory financing schemes, and the creation of a new International Diversification Fund.

10. We emphasize, the importance of the strengthening and attainment of the universality of the World Trade Organization and, in this context, call for accelerating the accession process without political impediments and in an expeditious and transparent manner for developing countries applying to the World Trade Organization, and also the provision of technical assistance by the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, within their mandates, thereby contributing to the rapid and full integration of those countries into multilateral trading system.

Financing for development

11. We urge developed countries to assist developing countries in their efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals as well as other development goals by providing adequate technical and financial assistance, in line with the internationally agreed targets for official development assistance of 0.7 per cent of GNP to developing countries and 0.15 per cent to 0.2 per cent of GNP to least developed countries. This needs to be linked to efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid, through better coordination, closer integration with national development strategies, greater predictability and stability, and genuine national ownership.

12. We deeply regret that despite some initiatives undertaken over the past years, the external debt burden persists as one of the main constraints for the development of developing countries, including middle-income countries. We firmly reiterate the urgent need for the international community to adopt an effective, comprehensive, equitable, durable, and development-oriented solution to the debt problems of developing countries, particularly through total debt cancellation and increased concessional financial flows, as well as through debt for sustainable development swaps.

13. We note with concern the unsatisfactory nature of the existing institutional arrangements for dealing with international tax matters, institutional arrangements that do not adequately address the concerns or represent the interests of developing States. We reiterate the urgent need for an inclusive, participatory and representative UN intergovernmental framework for international cooperation in tax matters.

14. We confirm the need to establish new innovative financial mechanisms to support the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development and strengthening their democratic systems, by raising new resources for productive investment and creating employment in order to provide answers to our people's legitimate needs while reaffirming the leading roles of national governments in the development process of each country.

15. We recognize the imperative need of mobilizing the international community and of generating additional resources for development so as to contribute towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as well as other development goals. In particular, we endorse efforts underway concerning the identification of new and alternative sources of funding, to be channeled to developing countries in a stable, transparent and predictable manner, with a view to the eradicating poverty and hunger and promoting development with equity. In this regard, we welcome the declaration arising from the world leaders meeting on "Action on Hunger and Poverty", convened by the President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, which was held in New York on September 20th 2004, and look forward to follow up actions that will have concrete effects over those important issues.

Sustainable development

16. We reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of Agenda 21 and the JPOI adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. We underscore that the fulfillment of the goals set in the JPOI will require increased provision of means of implementation and a strengthened North-South cooperation based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. We therefore urge the international community to fulfill its commitment to the full and expeditious provision of the means of implementation. We emphasize the importance for the CSD13 and its preparatory meeting, to discuss policy options and possible actions to address the constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation identified during the review year, in particular the provision of means of implementation, with the view to take policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation of the provisions of the JPOI in the thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlement.

17. We note that the meetings of UNFF identified the lack of the provision of means of implementation notably; inadequate technical, technological and financial resources as a major constraint for developing countries to promote sustainable forest management (SFM) and to implement IPF/IFF proposals for action. In this regard, UNFF5 will provide a unique opportunity for the international community to address this issue in an effective manner.

18. We note with concern the unavailability of funds for financing the projects under the operational program 15 of the GEF and in this regard the provision of adequate financial resources by the international community, in particular in the GEF-3 as well as in its next replenishment, is of utmost necessity.

19. We welcome the decision of the 8th Special session of the GC/GMEF of UNEP to launch the process of preparation of the strategic plan on technology support and capacity building. We emphasize that this plan is to be effective and action-oriented with clear time-tables and targets and sufficient resources for its implementation. This plan should be country-driven and address the priority needs of countries in the environmental field, based on the mandate of UNEP and in close cooperation with the relevant UN agencies and programmes and GEF.

20. We reaffirm our support for UN General Assembly resolutions on promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea within the context of sustainable development.

21. We welcome the proclamation of the year 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

22. Having considered the importance of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in attaining the Millennium Development Goals as well as its role in achieving sustainable development in developing countries, we urge the developed partners to raise their political and financial support so far extended to this Convention from a mere development aid instrument to an indispensable partnership framework whose overall objective is to contribute to the improvement of the global environment of our planet and to sustainable development of dry lands where hundreds of millions of people live.

South-South cooperation

23. We reiterate that South-South cooperation is an imperative to complement North-South cooperation in order to contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. We recognize that it is also an effective tool to maintain and strengthen solidarity and unity in order to enhance the welfare of developing countries.

24. We call for the implementation of the Havana Programme of Action and of the Marrakech Framework for the Implementation of South-South Cooperation that, taken together, represent a comprehensive framework for intensified cooperation among developing countries.

25. We welcome the decision adopted in June 2004 in Sao Paulo to launch the third round of negotiations under the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP), based on the principle of mutuality of advantage.

26. We stress and reaffirm the central role of the South Centre as the think tank of the countries of the south, and in this regard, call on member states, donor countries, international financial institutions including the Bretton Woods Institutions and the private sector to strengthen the financial base of the Centre by providing it with financial resources.

27. We welcome the progress made by the Asian-African Sub-Regional Organizations Conference (AASROC) held in Bandung, Indonesia, in July 2003 and in Durban, South Africa, in August 2004 to establish the New Asia Africa Strategic Partnership (NAASP) as an expression of the new political will of Africa and Asia to achieve a better future. We also look forward to the convening of the Asian-African Summit to be held in Indonesia in April 2005 in conjunction with the Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the 1955 Asian-African Conference.

28. We express our satisfaction for the results achieved so far by the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) in promoting South-South cooperation projects and we strongly encourage developing and developed countries to pledge contributions to the PGTF on the occasion of the annual UN pledging conference to be held in New York in early November 2004 in accordance with the Group's decision.

29. We recall the decision of the High-Level Conference on South-South Co-operation held in Marrakech, Morocco from December 16-19, 2003, where it was agreed to establish an open-ended intergovernmental study group to address the viability of the proposed G-77 Trade and Development Bank and in that context reiterates the decision recommending to the IFCC-XI to address this issue.

30. We approve the Financial Statement of the ECDC Account of the Group of 77 (G-77/AM(XVI)/2004/3). We express concern over the precarious financial situation of the ECDC Account and the fact that since the Havana Summit only 36 countries have paid their contributions in full. In this context, we appeal to all member States of the Group of 77 to contribute generously to the ECDC Account as decided by the South Summit in order to support the implementation of the annual programme of work of the Group of 77 and to ensure continuity of the smooth functioning of the Office of the Chairman.

31. We approve the Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for ECDC/TCDC (G-77/AM(XVI)/2004/2), which was presented in accordance with the guidelines for the utilization of PGTF, and also decide to extend from four to five years the term of office of the members of the Committee of Experts. We note with satisfaction the progress made so far by the PGTF in support of South-South cooperation projects and call upon all members of the Group of 77 as well as the United Nations system to support the expansion of resources of the Trust Fund. We commend the Chairman of the Committee of Experts for his continued commitment and leadership in the Fund's activities.

ICPD +10

32. We reaffirm the Programme of Action of the International Conference on population and Development. We are confident that the commemorative event to mark its 10th anniversary will provide an opportunity for consolidation of the international community's efforts for implementation of ICPD. We emphasize the need for assisting the efforts of the developing countries through provision of sufficient financial resources, technical assistance and capacity building activities for achieving the goals and targets contained in the Programme of Action.

International migration and development

33. We underscore that international migration is emerging as a very important global issue that should be considered as a priority in the UN agenda, with a view to identifying and implementing the appropriate ways and means to maximize its benefits. We welcome the General Assembly decision to convene a high level dialogue on international migration and development in 2006 with a view to discuss the various development related aspects of international migration and how it could better help the developing countries in meeting their development needs and the early realization of the internationally agreed development goals. In this regard, there is a need to enhance international cooperation on migration issues and make further efforts, including through appropriate mechanisms, to ensure that the human rights and dignity of all migrants and their families are respected and protected.

34. We welcome with appreciation the initiative of the Government of Peru to host a Special International Conference at the Ministerial level, during the first semester of 2005 in Lima, Peru, of Developing Countries with substantial international migrant flows.

NEPAD

35. We commend the dedication of the leaders and the people of Africa for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD), which represents the collective determination and commitment of Africa to place its countries irrevocable on the road to sustainable economic and social development by taking control of its own development and by fighting poverty. We also welcome the endorsement of NEPAD by the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Secretary-General as well as the support of the G8 and the EU amongst others. We recognize the importance of these steps in achieving one of the most important goals of NEPAD, namely the establishment of a new relationship based on partnership and mutual responsibility and accountability between Africa and the international community, to overcome the continent's marginalization.

36. We fully endorse NEPAD and strongly support its implementation. We call on the United Nations and the international community, as well as civil society and the private sector to contribute effectively to the implementation of NEPAD, including through South-South cooperation.

37. We express our support for the work of the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa and the discharge of its responsibilities and calls on the United Nations entities to mobilize and provide the necessary resources to fully fund the activities of the office in support of NEPAD.

SIDS

38. We reiterate the importance of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. We welcome the preparations being undertaken for the International Meeting for a full and comprehensive review of the Barbados Programme of Action to be held from 10-14 January 2005 in Mauritius. In this regard, we urge the donor community to contribute generously to the Voluntary Trust Fund to enable the full and effective participation of SIDS in the international meeting. We invite the international community to participate at the highest level and we seek their full support for the implementation of the outcome of the Mauritius International Meeting.

LLDCs

39. We recognize the special problems and needs of landlocked developing countries within a New Global Framework for transit transport cooperation for landlocked and transit developing countries. In this regard, we call for the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. We also stress the need for the implementation of the São Paulo Consensus adopted at the UNCTAD XI in São Paulo, Brazil on 18 June 2004, in particular paragraphs 66 and 84 thereof, by the relevant international organizations and donors in a multi-stakeholder approach.

LDCs

40. We underline the weak implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010 and urge the LDCs development partners to undertake increased efforts and speedy measures with a view to meeting the goals and targets of the programme of action in a timely manner.

Social Development

41. We reiterate our commitment to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action which recommended actions to create, in a framework of sustained economic growth, sustainable development and international cooperation, a national and international environment favourable to social development, eradicating poverty, enhancing productive employment, achieving full employment and fostering social integration. We commit ourselves to the outcome of the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalising world", held in Geneva, 26 June to 1 July 2000, which constituted a step forward for the promotion of social development for all at the national and international levels. In this regard, we underline the significance of the forthcoming 43rd Session of the Commission for Social Development, 9-18 February 2005, which will mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and we welcome the decision to convene a high-level plenary meeting during the forty-third session.

HIV/AIDS Pandemic

42. We reaffirm the importance of health as indispensable for sustainable development, and in this regard, we remain deeply concerned that HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases continue to threaten the achievement of economic and *social* development goals of developing countries. We remain concerned over the scourge of the HIV/ AIDS pandemic, and encourage the continued engagement by the international community in this matter, as manifested by the General Assembly High-Level Plenary meetings held on 22 September 2003 on New York. We welcome the successful outcome of the Fifteenth International

Conference on HIV/ AIDS held in Bangkok, Thailand on 11-16 July 2004. We welcome the Kathmandu Declaration adopted by the Ministerial Regional Conference on "Accelerating the Momentum to Fight Against HIV/ AIDS I South Asia" held from 3-4 February 2003 in Kathmandu, Nepal, in co-operation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNAIDS.

43. We welcome the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health which clearly recognised that the TRIPS Agreement should be interpreted in a manner supportive of the right to protect public health, in particular, to promote access to medicine for all. We reiterate the need for greater international co-operation and flow of assistance, in particular from developed countries, in the fight against the pandemic, the need for according priority to multilateral approaches and also for directing adequate resources to the Global Fund for its augmentation and urgent disbursement to all countries in need.

Racism and Racial Discrimination

44. We welcome the progress made in the implementation of the outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), held in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001 and call for the implementation of its objectives. We commend the international community for recognising that slavery and slave trade, including Trans-Atlantic slave trade, are crimes against humanity. The Conference also recognised that legacies of slavery, slave trade, colonialism, genocide and other forms of servitude have manifested themselves in poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation, social exclusion and economic disparities. We also commend the Conference for having agreed on NEPAD as a framework within which amongst other, remedial measures for redressing the legacies of these practices could be addressed and call for the formulation of similar programmes of reparations to descendants of slaves in the African Diaspora.

45. We express our commitment to the effective follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declarations and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. In this regard, we welcome the Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2002/68 and General Assembly 57/195 creating the necessary mechanisms and guiding the effective follow up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We reiterate our opposition to all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and express our deep concern on the resurgence of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in various parts of the world. We also reiterate that all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia as well as foreign occupation and related intolerance, constitute serious violations of human rights, which should be rejected through all political and legal means. We condemn the misuse of the new communications technologies, including the internet for inciting racial hatred and intolerance.

46. We note with appreciation the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for the comprehensive follow-up to the WCAR and the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We note that the process of the development of complementary international standards to strengthen and update international instruments against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, will commence in January 2005 in Geneva. We call on all the members of the United Nations to meet their commitment for the universal ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) by 2005.

Strengthening of the United Nations

47. We attach high priority to the reform of the United Nations and we reiterate our willingness to actively participate in the negotiations for the strengthening of the Organization, so that it can efficiently respond to the

current and future challenges including those concerns and interests of developing countries which constitute the vast majority of its membership. We reaffirm that such negotiations should be aimed at strengthening multilateralism, providing the Organization with a substantive capacity to fully and effectively meet the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, and at consolidating its democratic character and its transparency in the discussion, and implementation of decisions of Member States.

48. We note with deep concern that currently UNEP and UN-Habitat are over 90 percent funded through extra-budgetary resources leading to unpredictable, unreliable and unstable funding and thus affecting their planning and programme delivery. We therefore call on the Secretary-General to significantly increase regular budget funding to the two programmes to enable them to discharge their mandates effectively.

49. We welcome efforts to modernize and expand facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. However, we emphasize that there should be substantial programmatic efforts to bring in line the functional, institutional and financial arrangement of this Office with those of similar UN Offices at Geneva and Vienna. In addition, we call on UNEP and UN-Habitat to adhere to the headquarters rule to ensure full utilization of the administrative and conference facilities at Nairobi.

Other major issues and developments

50. We express our satisfaction with the launching of the preparatory process of the 2nd phase of the World Summit on the Information Society by the first preparatory meeting held in Hammamet, Tunisia, from 24 to 26 June 2004 and call for widest possible attendance and active participation in the Summit to be held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005. We reiterate the importance of the active participation of all countries at the highest level as well as the relevant stakeholders in the Summit in order to reach a common understanding of the information society, contribute to bridging the digital divide and giving a chance for all to benefit from the opportunities thus offered.

51. We take note with satisfaction of the establishment of the World Solidarity Fund in accordance with resolution 57/265 of the General Assembly, welcome the convening of the High-level Committee of the Fund and urge donor countries, international organizations, the private sector, relevant institutions, foundations and individuals to contribute to the Fund for the mobilization of the financial resources required for the immediate and effective operationalization of the World Solidarity Fund in order to allow it to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly poverty eradication.

52. We welcome the progress made by Venezuela to establish the International Humanitarian Trust Fund with a first deposit of US$30 million and call for support to this initiative to assist developing countries in their efforts to improve the welfare and standard of living of their people.

53. We call upon the international community to provide the necessary assistance to landmine clearance operations, as well as to the rehabilitation of the victims and their social and economic integration into the landmine affected countries. We express concern over the residues of the Second World War in particular in the form of landmines which cause human and material damage and obstruct development plans in some developing countries. We demand that the States responsible for laying the mines outside of their territories assume responsibility for the landmines, cooperate with the affected countries to get rid of them and to contribute defraying the cost of clearance and provide compensation for any ensuing losses and for reclaiming the affected areas for productive purposes. In this regard, we express support for the assistance in the demining efforts in the south of Lebanon and call on Israel to provide the United Nations with all the maps and information on the location of the landmines that it has planted in the south of Lebanon during its occupation

which are hindering the development and rehabilitation of the south of Lebanon and preventing the agricultural exploitation of vast areas of rich agrarian land.

54. We note that the First Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, is scheduled to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from November 29 to December 3, 2004, and urge participation at the "Nairobi Summit 2004 on a Mine-Free World" at the highest level.

55. We firmly reject the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterate the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. We emphasize that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment. We, therefore, call on the international community neither to recognize these measures nor apply them.

56. We call upon the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the UN Charter and international law, and to the principle of neighbourliness, causes huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba. We urge strict compliance with the Resolutions 47/19, 48/16, 49/9, 50/10, 51/17, 52/10, 53/4, 54/21, 55/20, 56/9, 57/11 and 58/7 of the United Nations General Assembly and express deep concern over the widening of the extra-territorial nature of the embargo against Cuba and over continuous new legislative measures geared to intensifying it. We therefore express concern and reject the new measures recently implemented by the US government, aimed at tightening the embargo. Those measures constitute a violation of Cuba's sovereignty and a massive violation of the rights of its people.

57. We express deep concern over the imposing of unilateral sanctions against Syria by the United States Government and consider the so-called "Syria Accountability Act", contrary to International Law and a violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and call upon the United States Government to null and void that act, and to resort to dialogue between the two countries based on respect and mutual interest for the best of the two nations and their peoples.

58. We reject the unilateral economic and financial sanctions imposed on the Sudan by the Government of the United States of America, and call for the immediate end of those sanctions.

59. We also express our deep concern over the air attack against the Elshifa Pharmaceutical Factory in the Sudan on 20 August 1998, and its negative impact on that country's economic and social development. We express our support and solidarity with the Sudan for its demand for a just and fair consideration of the matter by the United Nations on the basis of international law.

Situation in Palestine and the Middle East

60. We recognize the situations, special needs and suffering of peoples living under foreign occupation, especially when exacerbated by expansionism and settler colonialism, and we note that such situations have been reflected in the outcome documents of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. We reaffirm in this regard the permanent sovereignty of peoples living under foreign occupation over their natural resources. We remain specifically concerned over the continuing tragic and dangerous situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which has resulted in the further grave deterioration of the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people. In this regard,

we call for increased assistance and support to the Palestinian people until the realization of their national independence and their exercise of sovereignty in their State, Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

61. We call for the immediate and complete cessation and end to settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. In this regard we express grave concern over Israel's ongoing construction and expansion of illegal settlements as well as its unlawful construction of its expansionist Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. This has involved the illegal confiscation and destruction of Palestinian land and resources, the destruction of the livelihood of tens of thousands of protected Palestinian civilians, and the illegal, de facto annexation of expansive areas of Palestinian land.

62. We also call for the immediate Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and the other Arab occupied territories. We reaffirm our support for the Middle East peace process started in Madrid in 1991, and aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace. In this context, we support the peace initiative adopted by the Arab Summit in Beirut in March 2002.

63. We call for the full implementation of the Roadmap Peace Plan for the Israeli-Palestinian track by the concerned parties.

64. We support the inalienable right of Lebanon to utilize its waters in accordance with international law and in particular to ensure the social and economic needs of its population in the liberated areas and villages. We also call on Israel to end its air violations of Lebanese sovereignty and other violations that severely damage the security situation which is a critical factor in promoting the tourism industry and the economy.